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## "Trying It on the Dog" Good for the Actor If Not for the Play, Says Charles Frohman



Then, Too, It Quiets His Own Nerves, and What's More, He Finds a First Night Out of Town "Bully," for Then He Can Sit With the People in Front Without Being Recognized—And Sometimes He Nudges His Neighbor and Talks About the Play!

By Charles Darnton.

"DOG DAYS" may mean one thing to you and quite another to the man who produces plays. Yet like you these days, Charles Frohman, for one, will take off his hat and mop his brow at the mere mention of them. One way or another, we're all human!

For the past week or so Mr. Frohman has been fairly busy "trying it on the dog." First of all, "The Doll Girl" had to be taken to Atlantic City to play with the "dog." The only trouble with this "dog" is that he has many tails—and he wags them all. In short, everybody from everywhere goes to Atlantic City in a holiday mood and insists upon enjoying everything. Naturally, this is a baffling bewildering to a producer who is trying to get a direct verdict on his play. Yet for the past five years Atlantic City has been the pet "dog town" for Frohman productions.

"Such as he might like to do so, no manager probably will ever entirely discard the policy of trying a play out of town, and this for a peculiarly American reason," is Mr. Frohman's opinion. "The practice does not prevail in England, and this for a peculiarly British reason. In London an audience never expects a finished production on an opening night. Everybody is given the benefit of the doubt; all sorts of allowances are made. For example, on the opening night of 'The Marriage Market' in London there was a contract that lasted exactly thirty-five minutes while a mast of solid timber was being erected on a stage yacht. Imagine the result if a New York audience were kept waiting so long!"

It is quite easy to imagine a London audience sitting before a lowered curtain and murmuring: "Very restful, isn't it? Oh, quite!" But New York impatience would probably find expression in the surmise, "The star must have dropped dead," or, "Maybe they're waiting for the next act."

There is no first-night disposition to make allowances here—and perhaps there should not be," reflects Mr. Frohman. "But it is largely the absence of this tolerant spirit that causes managers to take their new plays out of town for first performances. Then, too, 'trying it on the dog' is good for the actor, if not for the play. A play that has been carefully rehearsed is likely to remain the same, though a musical comedy often undergoes many changes, especially if some of its songs are not favorably received. But any audience is better than no audience at all when a producer is trying to find out what the public thinks of his play. After all, the chief actor is the audience. When you get an audience acting with a play—hoping hard for the defeat of the villain, let us say, and equally hard for the

triumph of the hero—you have lifted so many people out of themselves. But in no two cities are audiences alike, and so, perhaps, the real value of first performances out of New York is found in the steadiness and self-command that actors gain from them."

So much for the "dog"! But that's not all, Mr. Frohman adds:

"In one respect at least John Drew's appearance in 'Much Ado About Nothing' on Monday night will be unique. It will be the first important Shakespearean production in over twenty years to be offered first of all in New York City. Every other Shakespearean production of the first grade within the last two decades has had its initial test in some smaller city. Yet John Drew has never acted Benedick. Actors of his importance almost invariably ask for at least a few performances anywhere but in New York 'to get easy' in their parts. In twenty years of play producing with John Drew—and there have been twenty-four plays in that time—twenty-two of them given their first performances in New York. This ought to demonstrate that Mr. Drew and I are willing to start here."

The "dog" is called back, and Mr. Frohman quietly turns to it with:

"Although I more frequently give first performances of my plays out of town I do so, frankly, to quiet my own nerves as well as those of the actors. It is absolutely impossible for me to witness a first performance 'from the front' in New York—that is, as one of the audience on an opening night. I cannot do it. To that extent I come to physical cowardice. The reason for this is that I could not endure the glances of my friends. Each look of approval to me would seem a sign of sympathy. I could not stand that."

Mr. Frohman shakes off the thought and then goes on:

"New York first-nighters are really so many stage producers—self-constituted producers. Their great happiness comes from detecting first-night mistakes. An audience of a thousand persons contains at least nine hundred stage managers. I feel their superiority too keenly. So I generally run away. A first-night out of town is a bully thing for me, not so much for what it tells me about the play as for the pleasure I get in feeling that I am absolutely unknown to those about me in the theatre. It is right among the people, and often I nudge the man next me. I have even told my neighbors how good I thought the play. And then I listen to what they say and sit back to enjoy the evening—knowing it isn't a first-night in New York. I even take the same pleasure in the actors' mistakes as first-nighters do in New York."

"One night I sat 'out front' in Cleveland, and soon became acquainted with the man on my right. He told me the plot of the play, who the actors were and what the orchestra would play. At the end of the third act, when the adaptor-stage manager appeared before the curtain in response to a call—he was in his shirt-sleeves, grimy, and peered through large tortoise-shell glasses—my neighbor turned and informed me, 'That's Frohman!'

Charles Frohman, actor, doesn't say whether his performance in Cleveland ended there. Instead he pockets his smile and assures you:

"Playing in a new place outside New York in no way changes the state of feelings of the real actor. All the sufferings of the real first-night must be endured when New York is finally faced. The actor may have won success, yet there is the ultimate test—New York. No success succeeds like a New York success. And once New York's endorsement is gained one feels the producer's work is over. It is very difficult, for me at least, even to enter the theatre in which a play has been successfully launched. For there is a heart in every play, and once it beats regu-



larly one fears to tamper with it, to cut near it. Fear never quite leaves the theatre; it is always there. Nothing could be more depressing than the stage on a first-night. It seems as if no reward could compensate for the agony of all concerned in the venture. One feels like dashing through the stage door never to return. My greatest pleasure in producing a play is to see it before an audience sees it, for then it seems to belong to me alone. Once it is seen by the public it no longer seems mine."

### A Sermon.

A few summers ago the Rev. George M. Christian, D. D., now retired emeritus of the Church of St. Mary the Virgin, this city, had a cottage along the line of a New Jersey railroad and made frequent trips to and from Manhattan. He knew all of the train hands and one day when about to leave town he walked along the train saying good morning to every one until reaching the baggage car. Finding the baggage master very quiet in answer to his greeting, he asked what the trouble was. "Well, doctor," the man replied, "I am in great trouble. I have a little girl at home who we think will die to-day." "What are you doing here?" the doctor asked. "I have got to make my run." "Have you asked to get off?" said the doctor. "Yes, but they won't let me off." "Give me your cap," said Dr. Christian, taking off his coat. "Give me your way bill. I will make your run for you and I will see that you don't lose your job either. If you do I will get you another. You go home." And go home the man did, and the good doctor handled baggage for the trip, from and back to Jersey City again, on a hot summer's day.

## "Devil Having a Fine Time in New York, While Women Wear Veils for Dresses"

—Rev. Dr. Len J. Broughton.

London Divine Scores This City for Its Recklessness in Manners and Morals—Many Women Sell Them-selves for Clothes or Work Their Husbands to Death.

Marguerite Mooers Marshall.

"New York is first of all a city of clothes. Walk down Broadway, the Great White Way, and what do you find to be the most salient characteristic? Neither wine, women nor song—but clothes! The feminine half of the population has gone daffy on the subject, and the situation is getting worse instead of better. Where one old skirt passes to-day five new ones are being made. And how the devil is enjoying himself!"

After this outbreak the Rev. Dr. Len J. Broughton shook his silver crowned head with a sad smile. Dr. Broughton is very much disturbed about the way we dress in this modern Babylon. He has come from Christ Church, Westminster, London, to stir our souls during a week of meetings at Tent Evangelical, One Hundred and Twenty-fourth street, near Amsterdam avenue. He is a tall, slender, pleasantly ascetic person, with decided opinions and an incisive way of putting them. To him New York seems a most ideal summer resort for his Majesty, and all on account of the things we wear and the way we wear them.

"It's not the silk skirt or the transparent gown or any one feature of fashion that I oppose," he told me, "but rather the whole question of clothes as it exists to-day. There never was anything like it before and there never will be a more demoralizing ex-

ample of the havoc it may create than in this very city. Almost all the other evils of the present time grow out of this root passion for dress."

"In some ways New York streets are cleaner than those in London. One certainly sees fewer intoxicated women here than in the great English metropolis. I believe that the open manifestations of the social evil are less frequent on Broadway than in Leicester Square or the Gaiety. Really, I think one gets into a pretty decent crowd on Broadway. But one never sees such extreme and sensational costumes in London as are to be beheld everywhere in New York."

"But how do you account for that?" I asked. "Do you really think the moral standard is lower here than in London?"

Dr. Broughton refused to admit that, so there is some hope for us, even though we do delight the devil's eyes! "I shouldn't say that there was more immorality in New York," he averred. "Rather, there is a greater defiance. There is an unrepentance, a lack of contrition, an independence of social convention which seems to characterize the New York woman. Women in London are more subdued, more hedged about by restrictions."

"Especially the milliners," I murmured.

"Oh, the fight for the vote is an English manifestation of feminine defiance," Dr. Broughton admitted. "We've got to do away with that."

"We don't want the vote for women. We want more sweethearts and more wives."

Personally, I don't see why a woman can't be a sweetheart, a wife and a voter, but it wasn't the time for a suffrage argument. I had to lure Dr. Broughton back to a comparison of the social life of New York and of London. I did it by asking him if London was

"trotting" as omnivorously as New York.

"All those sensational dances are much less popular in the British capital," he replied.

"Not only is it difficult to find a social function or even a restaurant in New York where the turkey-trot is absent, but it seems to me that the women talk of nothing else. When a group of them, even middle-aged matrons and mothers, get together, all one hears is 'Do you turkey? Does she turkey? I CAN TURKEY!' in all the varying moods and tenues. I'm ashamed of them."

"The turkey-trot is reminiscent of a turkey and of a Turk. If a woman wants to make herself look like one of the gilliest and most ungainly of our domestic fowls, let her dance this absurd step. If she wants to assume the role of a harem favorite, let her dance a la Turk."

"Another difference which immediately strikes one between the life of the restaurants and cafes in this city and in London is the ridiculous amount of money that is spent here. It is almost literally poured out for rich food and expensive wines. There is no such widespread extravagance in the other side. Of course, there are spend-thrifts everywhere. But the classes of English who have comparatively little money do not spend it all, and more, too, in the attempt to appear like millionaires. In England almost all of the poorest servant girls have their little bank accounts."

"Likewise, this evil of friskish and extravagant dressing is confined to a comparatively small class in London. Instead of permeating the whole population as it does here."

"This clothes problem that makes the New York woman nervous, irritable, whiny, whimsical, selfish and vain. If the mother of several daughters doesn't look

down with the strain of dressing them, it's because she's made of cast iron and chafed with steel. Many a woman to get money for the clothes she considers essential will sell herself or work her husband to death."

"Not by any means all women are so foolish," Dr. Broughton was quick to amend. "Please don't give me the impression that I think that I reverence and admire many women from the bottom of my soul. It has been said that women go to extremes in fashion to attract the attention of men. But I don't believe their design works. I think men hesitate to marry these fashion-plates, partly because they dread the expense and partly because they are afraid to come close to the burly-burly which surrounds a clothes-crazy woman."

"Personally I believe that the salvation of New York lies in the New York working girl. She doesn't wear gold bracelets on her ankle or a veil that calls itself a dress. She is the one sane thing in the midst of the dress-madness. I have the highest respect for her, and I believe she will lead us out of the evil maze into which we have fallen."

### Getting a Raise.

When Col. John A. McCaul produced the comic opera, "Palka," at Wallack's Theatre Alfred Klein made a great hit in the character of a monk. Klein was getting a salary of about \$20. Going into the Coliseum's office one evening, he asked that he might have an increase to \$40. "No," said the Coliseum. "I can't do it." "Well," said Klein, "make it \$35." "No," said McCaul. "Impossible!" "Well, Colonel," said Klein, "make it \$32.50." "No, no!" answered McCaul. "Say \$30.50," said Klein. "No! Can't do it." "Well, \$28.75," said Alfred. "All right," answered the Colonel. So Klein got his salary increased.

## Hear Ye, Hear Ye, Citizens of New York, "Affinity" Earle Has a Message for You!



In a Statement to Nixola Greeley-Smith Ferdinand Declares That Divorce Is Wrong, One Wife Is Plenty—Once More I Must Be Hounded as a Scoundrel Due to the Old Reputation Which I Can't Shake Off.

By Nixola Greeley-Smith.

Hear ye, hear ye, Citizens of New York, wanderers upon the primrose path of Broadway and ye who take the straight and narrow way to Harlem and the Bronx, Ferdinand Pinney Earle, best known perhaps as "Affinity" Earle, has a message for you. Ferdinand of the long whiskers, Ferdinand of the three wives, he who invented the soul-mate and copyrighted the affinity, has repented of his evil life and recants herewith. If he were in our midst and there was a soapbox on the corner of Forty-second street and Broadway I am sure he would mount upon it and preach us a little sermon. But as he is now in London trying to persuade his third wife, Dora, to abandon the idea of divorce proceedings, which she has threatened to institute, he has done the next best thing and sent us a letter about it. Or rather, he sent it to Alexander Harvey, author editor and next friend of the most kaleidoscopic husband of our times, to be given to me.

Ferdinand has had three wives, you remember. First Emily, then Julia, then

Dora. You must recall that when Emily found that Ferdinand loved Julia she invited her rival to visit at the Earle country place at Monroe, N. Y. Later she sailed for France with her child and not a divorce. Here Ferdinand, after doing a lot of talking and writing about soul mates, affinities, Tristan and Isolde, Lancelot and Guinevere, &c., married Julia. It did not take him long to discover that between a soul-mate and a celestial there is only one step, and after he had taken it the first thing we knew he was in the jail at Goshen, N. Y., charged with beating Julia up. Then Julia had her marriage annulled and took her child and went away from Ferdinand. The artist and poet—he really is a good artist and a respectable poet, as well as a very rich man—just had to marry somebody else. And, being on a little journey abroad, he picked up a few odds and ends for the studio and Dora of the Laughing Eyes, otherwise Dora Mildred, daughter of an English architect, who became Mrs. Earle No. 1.

Lately Mrs. Earle, third of the dynasty, announced her intention of divorcing Ferdinand, saying that she had known nothing of his husband's past. Yesterday Mr. Earle, who has been in London trying to dissuade her from the divorce, denied that she was unaware of his other marriages, and at the same time sent the recantation which follows this article to New York.

Mr. Alexander Harvey, author and editor, who gave me the Earle document, says that the artist-poet has reached a point in his development which reminds him very much of that of Shelley. Shelley, like the Earle of Shelley, denied that she was in marriage, last week, did not believe in marriage, and I have never heard that he changed

his mind. But Mr. Harvey says he did.

"Earle, like Shelley, has reached the point where he wishes to make his peace with society," Mr. Harvey says. "He knows now that theories in regard to soul-mates, &c., are but the nebulous imbecilities of inexperience or the greed of the silly old forces who go astray, women, seeking whom they may devour."

"But surely you don't call three different sets of children by the three living wives 'the nebulous imbecilities of inexperience,'" I protested.

"I don't want to characterize Earle's actions," Mr. Harvey answered. "He is my friend, and in my opinion the greatest living Anglo-Saxon. American man, as you must know, are very uninteresting. Isn't it strange that our practical, unimaginative people should have produced the greatest artist of all time—Shelley, and the greatest short story writer—Poe. Earle, who has the genius of interesting women, is just as great in his way as Whistler or Poe. He has the art of persuading any woman that she alone fascinates him; that she alone is the romantic figure in his life, and that any others are merely lay figures of his ways."

"I am so utterly ashamed of the turn things are taking in my family. For months I have been working to prevent divorce, which is so terribly wrong and silly."

"But I am powerless. A host of strictly church-going, narrow un-Christlike people have mixed themselves up in my affairs (due to the old reputation, which I can't shake off), and although I love Dora more than I have ever loved any woman, and although I ask only to be left in peace with her, I must face more trouble, and my little story must be everlastingly punished and Dora must go through life as a divorcee. Yesterday I saw her and tried to save my dear ones from trouble."

"There did exist a slight misunderstanding, which, however, was only bringing us closer together. The divorce idea, to which I am more and more opposed, seems to dog me. It is a menace to every true marriage and should be abolished. More and more I am for no divorce."

"And yet, once more I must be branded as a scoundrel, and, still worse, my little ones and my wife must be victims. I had to appeal guilty of adultery to save innocent people from getting involved in my scandals in connection with me."

"Yesterday I did all in my power to save my wife from her friends' stupid and narrow views—in vain. The English are phenomenally narrow and stubborn and 'righteous.' I am so thoroughly bowed, humiliated and discouraged by my failure to hold Dora, whom I love now more than ever—you ought to see little Yvonne (the loveliest and brightest child that ever breathed)—that the future seems hopeless. I am willing to support not only my wife but her mother and sister. I am ready to do anything and make any sacrifice to hold them. I have no pride, anything left but that one desire."

### Statement by Ferdinand Earle to Nixola Greeley-Smith.

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